



# Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown  
Eastern District of California

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## **STOCKTON WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FILING FALSE TAX RETURNS**

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that VENUS LATRES DAWSON, 31, of Stockton, Calif., pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton to one count of filing a false claim.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Internal Revenue Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Samantha Spangler, who is prosecuting the case, DAWSON admitted responsibility for her own false 2005 federal income tax return plus 24 other taxpayers' false 2006 returns that she submitted to the IRS.

DAWSON prepared the returns when she was employed at a major tax preparation firm in Stockton as a trained, certified, and bonded income tax preparer. Each return was false for one or more of the following reasons: the total income earned was overstated, the total amount of federal income tax withheld was overstated, or the total amount of income earned was understated. The result was an increase in the refund sought from the IRS.

The plea agreement also indicates that the business manager and co-owner of the tax preparation firm reported DAWSON's fraud to the IRS and cooperated with the IRS's investigation. The matter came to the manager's attention when customers called to check the status of their refund checks. When the manager checked the files, she discovered discrepancies between the original Forms W-2 in the files and the amounts reported to the IRS on the tax returns. DAWSON initially claimed there should be a second Form W-2 in the file, which the manager then looked for but could not find. DAWSON next claimed the discrepancies must result from input errors on her part. However, according to the manager, such "input errors" are nearly impossible because of the format of the company's computer system.

The total refunds claimed on all 25 returns was \$111,205, but the true total of the refunds is \$38,469. Therefore, the intended loss, the key figure for calculating the sentence, is \$72,736. The IRS paid a majority of the claims, and it is owed restitution of roughly \$43,654. Some Refund Anticipation Loans were issued at the time the return was filed, and then the IRS did not pay the refund, so the tax preparation firm's bank is owed restitution of \$9,222.10.

DAWSON is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Karlton on June 9, 2009, at 9:15 a.m. She faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, full restitution, and a three-year term of supervised release. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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